

Over his 33 years of service, Chris has achieved numerous accomplishments, all of which have greatly improved the Westchester area. In 1971, Mr. Becker received the Ardsley Fire Department Fire Fighter of the Year Award for his unwavering dedication in responding to nearly every alarm within his village. Also, he served as the Department's first Secretary for five years.

Though Mr. Becker's firefighting days were caused to come to a close in 1975 due to an illness, his volunteer activities continued on. As Ardsley Fire Department's Delegate to the Firemen's Association in the State of New York and the Westchester County Volunteer Firemen's Association, Chris's services persevered. One of his greatest accomplishments occurred in 1970 when he founded "The Westchester Volunteer," a bimonthly newsletter which supplies relevant news to firefighters throughout the county.

Mr. Becker also sits on both the Public Relations Committee and the Legislative Committee for the Firemen's Association in the state of New York, where he championed notable legislation such as the Cigarette Fire Safety Act and the Requiring of Adoption of the Fire and Building Codes. For all of the good he has brought to their community, the people of Westchester County will forever be indebted to this selfless volunteer.

I am certain that all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives will join me in extending a sincere offer of congratulations, as well as gratitude, to Mr. Christian Jos. Becker. It is a pleasure to recognize such a dedicated man who has used his life to benefit those around him.

BACK COUNTRY LANDING STRIP ACCESS ACT

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the "Back Country Landing Strip Access Act." This bill, which was introduced in the last Congress by Chairman Hansen of the Resources Committee, will prohibit the federal government from closing airstrips on public lands without the consent of the state aviation authority. I am grateful to Chairman Hansen for letting me re-introduce this bill this year, and would like to thank him and the 23 other original co-sponsors of this bi-partisan bill. I would also like to thank my fellow Idahoan, Senator CRAPO, for introducing this legislation in the other body.

Last year, Idaho and the other western states were threatened by some of the largest firestorms in the history of this country, in which more than 7 million acres of forest lands burned. People around the nation watched transfixed as brave firefighters battled on the ground and in the sky to protect lives and property. Most of those watching may not have been aware that the firefighters on the ground in these wilderness areas were supplied from airstrips on public land. Or that the aerial firefighting efforts depended on back country airstrips as safe havens in the case of emergency. Had back country landing strips not existed, firefighting efforts would have been crippled.

Incredibly, for eight years before the fires the federal government had sought to remove these airstrips. Amazingly, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior had removed numerous airstrips on public lands without even consulting with pilots, land users or state aviation authorities. This heavy handed land management by unelected federal bureaucrats has placed innumerable lives in danger. Imagine if you were a pilot and attempted a dead-stick landing onto an airstrip on your chart, only to find a grove of trees planted in your path. Or, if you evacuated a camper with a medical emergency, and the runway you need had been destroyed by government inaction, the results would be devastating. The Back Country Landing Strip Access Act is a common sense measure that will prevent the closure of landing strips, and will require public notice and state approval for any such proposal.

When this bill was introduced in the last Congress, many federal officials complained that it would place an unreasonable burden upon land management agencies. But how is it unreasonable for the federal government to seek the permission of a state before closing a field that a local community depends upon? Why is it unreasonable for rural communities to fly in the supplies and equipment they need to survive in winter?

Mr. Speaker, I know this bill will work if enacted because we in Idaho have been working with this system for years. When Congress established the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area in 1980, a provision was added that prohibited the federal government from closing any airstrip in the wilderness without the express written concurrence of the State of Idaho. This provision has not ruined the wilderness area. To the contrary, it has allowed the elderly, the handicapped and children to enjoy wilderness areas they would otherwise be unable to reach. It has preserved the ability of outfitters to bring sportsmen to the heart of the wilderness with a minimum of disruption. In short, it is a model for what we seek to accomplish in this bill.

This bill is a common sense measure to restore cooperation between federal and state governments. It does not force the reopening of closed airfields. It does not require the federal government to spend extra money to maintain back country strips. In fact, this bill authorizes the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with local groups to maintain back country strips.

America's public lands should not be allowed to become "no-fly zones." I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this vital legislation, and I am pleased to introduce it today.

HONORING CARLY FITZSIMONS BAKER

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, recently I published a speech in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD celebrating the centennial of California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. Today I rise to recognize an extraordinary leader of the Cal Poly community, Carly Fitzsimons Baker.

A graduate of St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana in 1961 and Cal Poly in 1985, Carly Baker has made countless contributions to the university and to the community of San Luis Obispo County for the past 22 years. While raising 4 children, Mrs. Baker has served as an unsung, yet remarkable partner to her husband, Warren, President of Cal Poly since 1979.

During the past decades of exceptional growth and achievement of the university, Carly Baker has played a central role in the university's efforts to strengthen external relations. Carly's grace, good humor and attention to detail have been evident in every event for visiting dignitaries, university board members, community leaders, donors and the President's Cabinet. The welcoming environment she has created has nourished an expanding circle of university friendships, critical to Cal Poly's future.

Carly Baker has made an enormous difference in our community's quality of life. She has distinguished herself with her contributions to the League of Women's Voters, the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission, the Women's Shelter, Children's Protective Services, the Children's Center Task Force, the Atascadero State Hospital Advisory Board, the Organization of State Hospital Advisory Boards, and the Performing Arts Center.

Mr. Speaker, Carly Baker has admirers more numerous than she could ever imagine. Today, I speak for all of them to proudly recognize someone whose accomplishments and charm has affected so many in such a positive way. Cal Poly's centennial slogan is "A Century of Achievement, A Tradition for the Future." Let the record show that Carly has played such a significant role in Cal Poly's remarkable achievements and will remain as one of the university's crown jewels well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Carly Baker on more than two decades of notable achievements.

TRIBUTE TO PETTY OFFICER 2ND CLASS SCOTT CHISM & SEAMAN CHRIS FERREBY

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 3, 2001

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I am very saddened to rise today in memory of Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Chism and Seaman Chris Ferreby.

As seamen assigned to the Coast Guard Station of Niagara, these two young men tragically lost their lives serving their community and their nation. This tragedy happened on a routine patrol voyage in which Scott Chism and Chris Ferreby, along with fellow crewmembers Michael Moss and William Simpson, were tossed into the frigid waters of Lake Ontario when their boat was overturned by a large wave.

Scott Chism had served three years and seven months in the Coast Guard. With the upcoming completion of his enlistment, he and his wife had planned to return to California. He leaves behind his wife, Lissa, a daughter, Kelsey, and a son, Caleb.